

SHEILA MASSINGALE

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EXHIBIT 7
DATE 1-22-13
HB Montana University System

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Dear Mr. Chairman:

My name is Sheila Massingale. I am currently attending Salish Kootenai College; I am triple-majoring in Business Entrepreneurship, Secondary Math Education, and Information Technology. I live in Hot Springs, which is a small town approximately 65 miles west of Pablo and SKC.

I am a 42-year-old single mother. As such, I struggled for years to support my children while working minimum wage, dead end jobs. I did not like the message that this lifestyle seemed to send to my children. This dissatisfaction with the status quo is what led me to attend SKC in 2001. After earning my degree, I worked as a computer repair specialist. In 2010, I decided to return to college because I wanted to open my own computer repair business. I have since altered my plans: I now want to teach—preferably at Salish Kootenai College. To this end, I am in progress Bachelor Degrees in Business Entrepreneurship, Mathematics, and Information Technology. Once I have completed these degrees (in 2015), I plan to begin teaching while pursuing a graduate degree in either Mathematics or Accountancy.

Salish Kootenai College is a prototypical example of higher education. The faculty, staff, and administrators genuinely care about each and every student who attends class. I have seen this caring attitude time after time. A few examples from my own experience are:

- The college offers a 50% fee waiver to all veterans once their GI Bill funding is expired. I, as a veteran of the US Army, receive this assistance.
- I am also the recipient of a non-beneficiary fee waiver, which covers the portion of my tuition and fees that my veteran's fee waiver doesn't cover.
- The instructors at SKC are always available to their students. I, personally, have experienced correspondence from several instructors during weekends, nights, and school breaks.
- The college provides a bus for the students who live in Hot Springs and some of the surrounding areas. Without this bus, I would not be able to attend school because I would not be able to afford the fuel and other related vehicle costs.
- The administrators at Salish Kootenai College are approachable and willing to help any student at any time.

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I would not be able to attend college if SKC wasn't available. For one thing, I "fell off" FAFSA funding last year due to the time limit that was imposed last year by the federal government. The cost of attending the next closest college, the University of Montana (a 150-mile round trip), would make the proposition absolutely impossible. The much higher tuition alone would be daunting but I would also have to factor gas money and vehicle wear and tear into the equation. The fact that SKC provides the financial assistance that I have mentioned means that I can attend the college without having to choose between eating and learning. I am also able to work at SKC. I hold several positions at the college: I am a Certified Master Tutor, currently working about 16 hours per week in the Writing Center, the Math Lab, and the Career Center/SSS Lab and I work for Campus Security on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from midnight to eight. The money that I earn from these jobs allows me to pay my household bills. The rest of my income is from scholarships and student loans.

I am a non-Native tax-paying Montana resident who attends Salish Kootenai College. The legislature should help SKC students at the same rate and amount as it does Montana resident students who attend state-owned colleges and universities. We need the Montana State Beneficiary Money of \$3,024 per student. You can help one of the best educational institutions in this great state by approving this appropriation for Salish Kootenai College and its students. Voting in favor of non-beneficiary funding is absolutely the right thing to do—indeed, it is the only thing you can do in good conscience.

Respectfully,

Sheila Massingale